THE

CASE

OF THE

MANCHESTER PETITIONERS,

TO THE

Hon. the Commons of Great Britain,

BRITISH MUSEUM

AGAINST

An Act of the laſt Seſſion, impoſing "a Duty on Cotton Stuffs, "Bleached or Dyed, and on Licences for Bleaching or "Dying the ſame," is briefly this:

PETITION. THE GENTLEMEN, CLERGY, LAND-OWNERS, MERCHANTS, MANUFACTURERS, DYERS, BLEACHERS, and others intereſted in the FUSTIAN TRADE in the towns of MANCHESTER, SALFORD, ELEVEN other adjacent, and two BOROUGH TOWNS, have humbly ſtated to this Honourable Houſe, that the ſaid Act has involved the Petitioners in the greateſt diſtreſs, and abſolutely threatens that valuable Branch of Commerce with inevitable ruin.

PROOF. In ſupport of which it has been incontrovertibly proved at the Bar of this Honourable Houſe, that the Petitioners, as Merchants, Manufacturers, Bleachers, and Dyers, are diſabled by this Exciſe Law from carrying on their trade, becauſe it expoſes them to the loſs of their goods, and to penalties greatly exceeding the value of them, even when the Manufacturer has not the moſt diſtant intention to defraud the Revenue.

PETITION. FUSTIANS exported under this Act are loaded with a conſiderable expence at every foreign market, and with other burthens, great and unavoidable in themſelves, but uncertain in their amount.

PROOF. It has alſo been fully proved, that the FUSTIANS EXPORTED under this Exciſe Law are loaded with Five per Cent. at every foreign market independent of the Tax, and without producing from it ONE SHILLING to the Revenue; and the particulars of that Five per Cent. are here given.

Expences of obtaining drawback	—	—	1 1-half.
Increaſe of ſervants	—	—	3-fourths.
Diminution of return And decreaſe of capital	—	—	1 1-fourth.
Increaſed expence of dying	—	—	1 1-half.
			Five per Cent.

And to a certain loſs of three-quarters per Cent. by the pieces being cut into halves and thirds, each end of which is obliged to have a frame mark

mark and ſeal upon it, which on the moſt moderate calculation will be three-quarters per Cent. on the whole Trade both Home, and Foreign; and are by the ſame law ſubjected to much greater burthens by reſtrictions and unavoidable detentions, which frequently occaſion a loſs of ſale, and for which no charge can poſſibly compenſate.—By the repeated payment of duty on the ſame pieces.—By material injury in their finiſh from unpacking and repacking at the ports to examine the goods before the debenture can be obtained, and not only by a refuſal of it (when goods do not correſpond with certificates of the duty being paid) but ſhould the package be robbed, or any of the goods loſt on the road, the remainder of them are abſolutely forfeited.

It is well worthy of remark, that ſince his examination, one of the witneſſes has received advice, of ſome of his cheſts having been robbed in their way to the ports. Had he claimed the drawback he is intitled to under this Act, it would have ſubjected him to the loſs of the remaining goods, to the amount of nearly £ 500.

PETITION. This Duty will eſſentially affect Labour, will operate as a Tax upon it, and yet cannot be productive; it will ultimately deſtroy our Trade, and diminiſh the Public Revenue in the ſame proportion as it diminiſhes Commerce, and thoſe various exciſeable articles, which ſpring from that ſource.

PROOF. It is an eſtabliſhed fact, that Labour conſtitutes three parts in four of the average value of the FUSTIAN MANUFACTURE, and therefore this Exciſe Law impoſes a Tax on Labour.

As the Manufacture decreaſes, ſo will the employment of the Poor, THEREFORE not only the PUBLIC REVENUE will be diminiſhed by the reduced conſumption of all thoſe various and exciſeable articles, which their ingenuity and induſtry have heretofore enabled them to purchaſe; but the LANDED INTEREST will be alſo materially affected by the decreaſe of this part of the Revenue, which has hitherto been paid on the conſumption of thoſe articles.

PETITION. The low price of Labour in Ireland, its exemption from inland duties, and from the reſtrictions and burthens inſeparable from Exciſe Laws, will occaſion the Fuſtian Manufacture of this kingdom to meet the Iriſh at every foreign market to a diſadvantage ſo great, as will not fail to give a decided ſuperiority to the Manufacture of that Kingdom.

PROOF. It has been proved to demonſtration, that if either this Act is not repealed, or the Iriſh reſolutions paſs into a law, the Iriſh Manufacturer will have a decided ſuperiority over the Britiſh, by the low price of her proviſions and Labour. By her exemption from Land-Tax, Poor's Rate, and thoſe various Exciſe and Stamp Duties with which we are burthened. By the entire freedom of her Manufacture from the reſtrictions interwoven with, and inſeparable from, the Laws of Exciſe. By the non-diminution of her Manufacturers return, nor the decreaſe of his capital, to pay Exciſe Duties. By her ſuperior ſituation to England for Imports and Exports—By her bounties on Exportation of her own Manufactures, which operate as a duty on the Britiſh Manufacture at every foreign market—and by her poſſeſſion of all our Patent Improvements, of which ſhe has the free uſe, and of which (the Patentee excepted) the Britiſh Manufacturer is deprived.

PETITION. This Tax will burthen the Fuſtian Trade for Home Conſumption with an expence ſo conſiderable, as will annihilate the Manufacture of all low-priced Fuſtians, and thereby deſtroy the nurſery for Weavers, ſo very eſſential to the exiſtence of the trade, and alſo deprive the Aged of Employment.

PROOF. To ſuſtain this part of the Petition, it has been undeniably proved, that the HOME TRADE is loaded with Six and a half per Cent. on the average; the particulars of which are here enumerated.

Average of the Tax on the whole Trade -	3 per cent
Diminution of Return, and Decreaſe of Capital	1 1-half
Unavoidable increaſed expence of Dying - -	1 1-half
Increaſed expence of ſervants - - - - -	1-half
Six 1-half per Cent.	

And

And the LOW-PRICED FUSTIANS, which are ſo very neceſſary to the exiſtence of the trade, are loaded with Nine 1-half per Cent. which is made out in the following manner:

The tax on an average upon this part of the Fuſtian Manufacture — — —	6	per cent.
Increaſed expence of ſervants — —	1	1-half
Diminution of return, and decreaſe of capital —	1	1-half
Unavoidable increaſed expence of dying —	1	1-half
Nine 1-half per Cent.		

Theſe low-priced articles are the very nurſery of all young beginners, in the ſpinning and weaving branches, and furniſh employment not only to them, but to the aged and infirm, and before paſſing the late Act formed a conſiderable part of the home conſumption, but which the German, Ruſſian, and Iriſh linens will now have ſo decided a ſuperiority over, as cannot fail immediately to deſtroy this part of the Manufacture, on which the whole depends.

ETITION. The Petitioners implore the attention of the Houſe to the difficulties in employing their Weavers, and Spinners, during the unhappy ſuſpenſion of buſineſs, by which they have, to the utmoſt of their power prevented emigration; and the peace of the country hath been hitherto effectually preſerved.

ROOF. The Petitioners have inconteſtibly proved, that they have moſt aſſiduouſly employed their work-people during the unhappy ſuſpenſion of buſineſs under this Exciſe Law, to prevent emigration, and to preſerve, to the utmoſt of their power, the peace of the country in which they reſide.

In a country where LABOUR, INGENUITY, and INDUSTRY are taxed, EMIGRATION muſt be the fatal conſequence. At the moment when our rival Manufacturers in various parts of Europe (which has been alſo proved) are holding out the moſt liberal offers, and giving every poſſible encouragement to our ingenious artiſts to go and reſide amongſt them, we are, by this reſtrictive and burthenſome Exciſe Law, *forcing* our Artiſts to accept them.

ETITION. Whatever diminiſhes the Fuſtian Manufacture, muſt leſſen in the ſame degree the importation of Cotton Wool. A circumſtance eſſentially injurious to the Navigation of this kingdom, whilſt it foſters and promotes that of our rivals.

An aſſertion ſo ſelf-evident carries its own proof with it.

ETITION. Two-thirds of all FUSTIANS being actually exported are entitled to a drawback; and the annual return of the Trade is burthened by this Tax with a much greater amount than it can poſſibly produce to the Treaſury.

ROOF. The Export Trade being burthened with Five per Cent. and the Home Trade with Six and a Half per Cent. and it having been proved that the Tax is, on an average of the whole Trade, Three per Cent. out of which two-thirds are drawn back on exportation, there can only remain One per Cent. *from which* the expences of collecting the whole Tax are to be deducted; THEREFORE the whole Trade is loaded with more than FIVE TIMES the amount it can produce to the Treaſury.

ETITION. The Manufacturers of Fuſtians have never received nor ſolicited any Parliamentary Aid.

It is a well-known and admitted fact, that the Petitioners have never received or even applied for any Parliamentary Aid, have neither oppoſed nor complained againſt general Taxation, will ſtep forward with alacrity amongſt the foremoſt to contribute to the general exigences of the State, although they have been greatly oppreſſed and injured by this Exciſe Law on their Fuſtian Manufacture, which is IMPOLITIC, IMPRACTICABLE, and UNPRODUCTIVE.

RAYER. That this Act may be repealed.

This Petition was ſubſcribed by near EIGHTY THOUSAND PERSONS.

THE CASE OF THE Manchester Petitioners,

TO THE

Honble. the Commons of Great Britain.